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Internship Report
Interning at PECC International Secretariat in
Singapore

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Flipping social media and news app, I could only see dim future for the world. Distrust and skepticism loomed the globe. There were countless disputes on different areas such as territory, resources and trade. I wondered whether all these marked the failure of globalization and multilateralism. Amidst all the chaos and confusion, I was glad to be nominated by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to serve the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC). The nomination provided me a precious opportunity to work in an Intergovernmental Organization where strenuous efforts were made to make intergovernmental collaboration possible.

Indonesia Development Forum 2019: Skills of the Future

As an education student whose speciality was comparative and global education, I was given the opportunity to prepare meeting materials on behalf of the Secretary General of PECC in an international forum which was about future skills. The forum targeted international organizations, government agencies and technology companies like Google. I could not imagine that I was involved in the forefront of education policy making. The preparation process was an eye-opening experience for me. Extracting useful information from raw data was a challenging task, it was even more challenging to present all the information precise and concise to all stakeholders. I was glad to have Eduardo and Chaitri shedding light on all sorts of mechanisms in international organizations.

The preparation work has also brought me insight into 4th Industrial Revolution. The new round of industrial revolution will make significant impact on every aspect in peoples' life. However, it comes to experts' attention that our education system is not ready for that. Workers, educators and students are not equipped with relevant skills. There is a possibility that skills and jobs displacements may exist and further weaken growth in the region.

Being an education professional, I am reminded of keeping myself updated and not to confine to my profession. Afterall, people are immersed in a world of complexity and constant change. I shall always be vigilant about the needs of our future generations and society.

Identifying Risks in the World and in the APEC Region

It was an intriguing yet challenging experience to work for PECC. Mr. Pedrosa, the Secretary General, asked me to identify risks and highlights of economic outlook for 2020. I was tasked with reading publications from several development finance institution (DFI) and summarizing key points from these publications. Through these readings, I realized that it took great efforts for senior officials to make informed decisions. Painstaking efforts were made to scrutinize all sorts of information. All the information helped experts to formulate various policy recommendations. No matter how hard experts ameliorate a policy, there are always risks and downsides in every policy. After weighting up all factors, policy makers need courage and will to set sail across all the tides.

Economic Modelling Analytics and Forecasting

During my stay in PECC, I compiled and analyzed statistics from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international agencies. Collecting and validating data were pretty challenging for me, it took me some time to refresh myself on excel. There were lots of data processing tasks which required intensive modelling skills. One of the most memorable tasks was to find out factors that affected GDP forecast in the past 2 decades. It took me a whole week of trial and error to identify various factors used in different organizations. I am thankful that the internship enabled me to pick up all these skills.

Preparing for the State of the Region Report 2019-2020

The State of the Region Report is the annual publication of PECC which requires extensive manpower. I was responsible for reviewing opinions from experts of different sectors from all the member economies. It was interesting to see how experts across sectors give their forecast about future events. From their response, I tried to immerse myself into their logic and thinking process. It was interesting to me that people across the sea could hold a fundamentally different view on the same issue.

I was also tasked to draft a small part of the SOTR report, it was totally different from what I had expected. When I found that my expression would represent the view of 23 member economies and other official members, scribbling a few words suddenly became the most difficult thing in the world. At that moment, I realized the burden and pressure on officials who work for national agencies and international organizations.

Insights from Symposiums, Seminars and Networking Events

It was very kind that Betty arranged a full range of events for us to get well acquainted with the local and international communities in the region. Through participating all these events, I was exposed to a lot of topics that I had limited knowledge before. The hottest topic among government officials and scholars must be China-US trade tension. On different occasions, I saw people pulled themselves together to strive for a better future. They proposed different alternatives in a bid to make cooperation possible. I felt so blessed to acquire a lot of ideas and fresh perspectives from these events.

Final Remarks

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude and thankfulness to the PECC team. The summer was never an easy time for those who cherished Hong Kong and kept abreast of Hong Kong's development. I was glad to work closely with all the International Secretariat staff whom provided me all their attention and support. Ed, Betty, Chai, Zakiah and Nor made me find PECC and Singapore like home. Their warm hospitality will be etched on my heart.

Last but not least, I would also like to thank HKSAR, TID and HKCPEC for nominating and sponsoring me to attend this programme, in particular Steve and Kathy for all the logistics arrangements. I am also grateful for the support I received from Josephine of HKU Cedars.

People and things that I came across in Singapore shedded light on my path ahead, it also brought me hope for the future. I wish I could create positive impact things around me and shape a better Hong Kong.